CHEMICAL USE AND STORAGE POLICY AND PROCEDURE

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Purpose and Scope

The purpose of this policy and procedure is to ensure the safety of staff, consumers and others when handling and storing hazardous chemicals.

It applies to all staff and meets relevant legislation, regulations and Standards. It should be read in conjunction with Bilingual Care's *Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure*

Applicable Strengthened Aged Care Quality Standards

- *Standard 2. The Organisation*
- *Standard 3. The Care and Services*

Definitions[1]

Consumer Products – products packed primarily for use by a household consumer and used in a manner consistent with normal household use. Consumer products include small quantities of domestic cleaning products and detergents, as well as chemicals used in an office such as printer toner and whiteboard cleaners. Large volumes of these products, such as a 30kg container of laundry detergent used to wash large volumes of linen, are not considered a consumer product. They should be treated as hazardous chemicals for the purpose of this policy and procedure.

Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS 7) - an international hazard classification system for chemicals created by the United Nations. The hazards are communicated on labels and safety data sheets, including how to safely store, use and dispose of chemicals.

Hazardous Chemicals – are substances that can pose significant risks to health and safety if they are not managed correctly. They may cause adverse health effects, injure people and/or damage the environment/property. Consumer products (defined above) are not considered hazardous chemicals for the purpose of this policy and procedure. Chemicals are considered hazardous if they are listed on Safe Work Australia's *Hazardous Substances Information System*[2] and are above the concentration level which is harmful to human health. Hazardous chemicals can take the form of solids, liquids or gases.

[1] Based on the definitions used by Safe Work Australia, https://www.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/safety-topic/hazards/chemicals

[2] See http://hcis.safeworkaustralia.gov.au/

In-transit – hazardous chemicals are in-transit if they are not used in the workplace and are not kept at the workplace for more than five consecutive days. However, where the workplace frequently has in-transit hazardous chemicals present, or if they are present in significant quantities, they should be treated as a hazardous chemical for the purpose of this policy and procedure.

Safety Data Sheet (SDS) – a document prepared by the manufacturers of chemicals that provides information about a hazardous chemical to ensure users can work safely with the substance. Information in SDSs includes the substance's physical properties (e.g., melting/boiling point, toxicity, reactivity), health effects, first aid requirements and safe handling procedures (e.g., personal protective equipment, safe storage/disposal and spills management).

If not provided in physical form with a chemical, SDSs should be located on the manufacturer's website. SDSs are valid for 5 years but should be checked at least annually in the event the manufacturer has made updates.

Policy

Bilingual Care ensures that when hazardous chemicals are introduced into Bilingual Care workplaces, they are recorded, handled and disposed of appropriately.

Procedures

Identifying Hazardous Chemicals

The Managing Director must ensure all hazardous chemicals are identified and clearly labelled or signed within the workplace, as per the GHS 7 classification system.

Recording Hazardous Chemicals

The Managing Director must ensure that details of all hazardous chemicals (other than in-transit or consumer products) used at Bilingual Care are recorded in a *Chemical Register.*

The *Chemical Register must* be reviewed when new or additional quantities of chemicals are introduced into the workplace. Review is also required when the processes in place to protect people from harm from specific substances need to change or are no longer effective.

Handling Hazardous Chemicals

The Managing Director must ensure Safe Work Procedures (SWPs) are developed and implemented for handling hazardous chemicals used by Bilingual Care. See Bilingual Care's *Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure* for more detail on developing SWPs.

Safety Data Sheets

The Managing Director must maintain a hard copy collection of current *Safety Data Sheets (SDSs)* for all hazardous chemicals used by Bilingual Care. The SDS obtained for each chemical must be the current authorised version prepared by the manufacturer. SDS are valid for a period of 5 years, and the Managing Director will check currency at least monthly.

The *Chemical Register and* associated SDSs are to be kept by the Managing Director in a suitable location which is known and accessible to all staff in the workplace, as well as any other person who is likely to be exposed to the hazardous chemicals. SDS are a helpful reference as they contain information about:

- hazards of the chemical and how to handle it safely, including storage and disposal
- physical and chemical properties of the chemical, as well as potential health and emergency response measures and
- environmental effects of the chemical.

Health Surveillance

The Managing Director must regularly refer to and comply with health surveillance requirements set out in SDSs, to support the health and safety of staff exposed to hazardous chemicals.

Labelling Hazardous Chemicals

The Managing Director must ensure all hazardous chemical storage containers are clearly labelled and in accordance with the *Globally Harmonised System of Classification and Labelling of Chemicals (GHS 7)*. Labels must remain intact, legible and unaltered. The receipt date for hazardous chemicals should be marked on their containers so staff can monitor their age and promote the use of older materials first.

Containers with unknown substances in them should be labelled 'CAUTION DO NOT USE: UNKNOWN SUBSTANCE'. Steps must then be taken to ascertain and label the contents, or if it cannot be identified, contact a local waste management authority to arrange for the substance's safe disposal.

Refer to NSW Code of Practice for further guidance on labelling hazardous chemicals.

- *SafeWork Australia's Labelling of Workplace Hazardous Chemicals Code of Practice, December 2022*
- *SafeWork NSW's Labelling of Workplace Hazardous Chemicals Code of Practice, December 2022 (**NSW**)*

Storing Hazardous Chemicals

The Managing Director must ensure that hazardous chemicals are stored appropriately and only with other compatible substances. It is important that incompatible chemicals are separated as they may ignite or explode, release toxic, flammable or corrosive gases, or corrode the container causing them to leak if mixed.

Refer to NSW legislation for further detail on how to safely store hazardous chemicals.

- SafeWork NSW's *Managing Risks of Hazardous Chemicals in the Workplace Code of Practice, 2022* (**NSW**)

Storage quantities should be kept to a minimum to cater for demand only. Excessive storage for long periods should be avoided to ensure the strength and integrity of the chemical is not compromised.

Signage

The Managing Director must ensure that signage is put in place to provide a visual warning of any areas where hazardous chemicals are stored in large quantities.

This includes ensuring that all purpose-built cupboards, cabinets and refrigerators are labelled to indicate the type and class of chemicals being stored in them. Additional warning signs may also be required, such as “DO NOT USE TO STORE FOOD”.

Risk Management

In accordance with Bilingual Care’s *Risk Management Policy and Procedure,* the Managing Director must implement a risk management process regarding chemical use and storage. This includes actively identifying hazards and implementing risk controls to eliminate or reduce the risks associated with these hazards.

Emergency Procedures

In accordance with the *Emergency and Disaster Policy and Procedure,* Bilingual Care must ensure appropriate emergency management provisions are in place to respond to incidents involving hazardous chemicals.

These provisions may include:

- spill kits or containment equipment
- Safe Work Procedures (SWPs) for spills or release of chemicals
- fire blankets/extinguishers
- first aid kits
- appropriate numbers of trained emergency wardens and first aiders and
- clearly displayed emergency contact details.

Restricted Chemicals

Certain substances are restricted by law and are not permitted in Bilingual Care workplaces at any time. A list of these are found in NSW regulation.

- *Schedule 10 of the Work Health and Safety Regulation 2017 (**NSW**)*

Chemical Waste and Disposal of Chemicals

The Managing Director must ensure hazardous chemical waste is disposed of as per Bilingual Care’s *Waste Management Policy and Procedure.*

Consultation, Information and Training

As per Bilingual Care’s *Work Health and Safety / Occupational Health and Safety Policy and Procedure ,* the Managing Director must consult staff about hazardous chemical management. Consultation should occur in relation to:

- introduction of new chemicals to the workplace
- identification and assessment of risks associated with chemicals in the workplace
- decisions about control measures to be implemented and
- induction and training requirements.

Reporting

Incidents relating to hazardous chemicals should be managed and reported in accordance with Bilingual Care’s *Incident Management Policies and Procedures.*

Supporting Documents

Documents relevant to this policy and procedure include:

- *Work Health and Safety Policy and Procedure*
- *Workplace Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Consumer Incident Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Risk Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Emergency and Disaster Management Policy and Procedure*
- *Risk Register*
- *Chemical Register*
- *Emergency and Disaster Management Plan*
- *Safe Work Procedures*
- *Risk Register*
- *Safety Data Sheets (SDS)*

Monitoring and Review

This policy and procedure will be reviewed at least annually by the Leadership Team. Reviews will incorporate staff, consumer and other stakeholder feedback, where relevant.

Bilingual Care's *Continuous Improvement Plan* will be used to record improvements identified and monitor the progress of their implementation. Where relevant, this information will be considered as part of Bilingual Care's service planning and delivery processes.

DOCUMENT CONTROL

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